REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims are 1-4 and 53. Claims 1 and 4 have been amended and claim 5 has been canceled in favor of new claim 53 to better define the respective inventions recited therein. In addition, claims 6-52, which the Examiner has withdrawn from consideration as directed to a non-elected invention, have been canceled without prejudice. Support may be found, *inter alia*, in the disclosure at page 3. Reconsideration is expressly requested.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for the reasons set forth on page 3 of the Office Action. In response, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 4 and have canceled claim 5 in favor of new claim 53 to better define the invention. With respect to the Examiner's inquiry concerning the term "substantially in the same position," Applicants respectfully draw the Examiner's attention to page 3 of Applicants' disclosure which reads:

"That the welding torch is substantially in the same position during the cleaning procedure is meant to imply that slight changes in position, for instance in the longitudinal direction of the welding torch, are permissible. Such slight changes in position, however, involve only little time, which is why the cleaning method can nevertheless be carried out very rapidly."

For clarification purposes, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite that the welding torch is in the same position during the application of a cleaning liquid or a wetting liquid, apart from slight changes in position in the longitudinal direction of the welding torch. It is respectfully submitted that the foregoing amendments overcome the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and Applicants respectfully request that the rejection on that basis be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by *Baum et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,891,127*. Claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as

being anticipated by *Baum et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,369,357*. The remaining claim 3 under consideration by the Examiner was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over either *Baum et al. '127* or *Baum et al. '357* in view of any one of *U.S. Patent No. 4,702,195 to Thielmann, U.S. Patent No. 4,778,976 to Litt et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,834,280 to Thielmann, or U.S. Patent No. 5,138,969 to Thielmann*. (The Office Action refers to "5,138,896"; however, in a telephone conference with the Examiner on September 25, 2008, the courtesy of which is greatly appreciated and the substance of which is set forth herein, the Examiner confirmed that the correct number should be as listed on the "Notice of References Cited" Form PTO-892 attached to the Office Action, namely *U.S. Patent No. 5,138,969*).

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As set forth in claim 1 as amended and in new claim 53, Applicants' invention provides a method for cleaning welding torches, wherein a cleaning or wetting liquid is applied to the tip of the welding torch and the tip of the welding torch is

subsequently exposed to an electromagnetic field for the contactless removal of foreign substances.

As recited in claim 1 as amended, the welding torch is in the same position during the application of the cleaning liquid or wetting liquid, apart from slight changes in position in the longitudinal direction of the welding torch and the subsequent exposure to an electromagnetic field.

As recited in new claim 53, the cleaning or wetting liquid is applied to the tip in a first position and the tip is subsequently exposed to an electromagnetic field in a second position immediately above the first position.

Thus, in both the method of claim 1 as amended and the method of new claim 53 the welding torch is substantially in the same position during both cleaning procedures.

Baum et al. '127 shows a system for cleaning a welding

torch, where the position of the welding torch between the step of wetting the tip of the welding torch with cleaning or wetting liquid and the step of electromagnetic spatter removal must be changed. This change in position of the welding torch makes it necessary to program the robotic device with the welding torch accordingly. Further, the cleaning procedure will be extended in time, which will be contrary to Applicants' method as recited in claim 1 as amended and new claim 53 which provide a cleaning method which promotes rapid and automatic cleaning.

Likewise, *Baum et al. '357* shows a cleaning station for welding torches where the welding torch is not in the same position during the application of the cleaning liquid or wetting liquid and the subsequent exposure to an electromagnetic field.

Thus, neither *Baum et al. '127* nor *Baum et al. '357* show a method for cleaning welding torches whereby on the welding torch a cleaning or wetting liquid is applied and the tip of the welding torch is subsequently exposed to an electromagnetic field more or less in the same position of the welding torch. In

contrast to Applicants' method as recited in claim 1 as amended and new claim 53, the welding torch in conventional cleaning methods, such as those employed by the *Baum et al.* references, must be newly positioned from the container with the cleaning liquid to the coil during the cleaning procedure, which change in position will optionally have to be repeated several times. Those operating steps require additional time and thus, increase the overall cleaning time of the welding torch, during which the welding torch will not be available for welding processes. In those methods, the position must be defined twice when taking the welding robot into operation.

The remaining references to *Thielmann '195*, *Litt et al.*, *Thielmann '280*, and *Thielmann '969* have been considered but are believed to be no more relevant. None of these references discloses or suggests a method for cleaning welding torches wherein both cleaning steps, the application of a cleaning liquid to the tip of the welding torch and the exposure to an electromagnetic field for the contactless removal of foreign substances, are performed more or less in the same position of

the welding torch as recited in claim 1 as amended and new claim 53.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 as amended and new claim 53, together with claims 2-4 which depend on claim 1, are patentable over the cited references.

In summary, claims 1 and 4 have been amended, claims 5-52 have been canceled, and new claim 53 has been added. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the claims be allowed and that this application be passed to issue.

Applicants also submit herewith a Second Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosures: Second Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement, Form PTO-1449 with eight (8) references, Copy of Japanese Office Action dated September 2, 2008, Check in the amount of $180.00

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on December 17, 2008.

Amy Klein